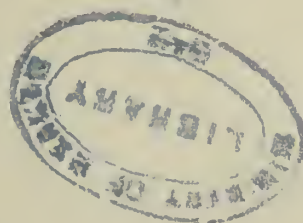


MURAL DISTRICT OF BRIDGWATER.

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1941

R. H. WATSON, M.B., B.Ch., F.A.C., D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1947

Health Department,
Town Hall,
Bridgwater.

June, 1948.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Bridgwater Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my First Annual Report on the health of the Rural District. The report is in the same abbreviated form as its predecessors.

Dr. G.W. Pringle left the service of the Council in June, on appointment as Medical Officer of Health to the Borough of Worthing and I succeeded him on the 1st July.

The Central Office, established in 1942, for the Medical Officer of Health of the Bridgwater Borough and Rural District, has contributed greatly to the co-ordination of the work of the two Authorities, but with the appointment of the Medical Officer of Health as Medical Officer to the Mid-Somerset (Bridgwater) Divisional Executive it has been necessary to ask for an increase in clerical staff. This has also necessitated additional office accommodation, and it was therefore suggested that the School Clinic should be moved from Albert Street to the Health Centre at Mount Street, and that the ground floor of the building vacated at Albert Street, should become a combined Health Department for the Borough and Rural District Councils and the Divisional Executive. This would be a great improvement over the existing arrangements, in which the clerical work of the Public Health Department and the School Medical Services are carried out in separate buildings.

The birth rate has risen from 17.42 to 20.61, while the death rate has shown little change. The infantile mortality rate fell from 39.87 to 37.33. Otherwise the vital statistics show little change on the previous year's figures.

I wish to thank the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee for their support, Mr. Hoile and his assistants for their excellent cooperation, and the Heads of other Departments for their assistance during the year.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

R.H. MATSON.

STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1947

Area (Acres)	86.608
Population (Registrar General's estimate)	18,920
No. of inhabited houses on 31st December, 1947	5,436
Rateable value on 31st December, 1947	£87,449
Sum represented by ld. rate on 31st December, 1947	£ 365

Live Births

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	199	172	371
Illegitimate	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>19</u>
	<u>208</u>	<u>182</u>	<u>390</u>
<u>Birth rate</u> per 1,000 of estimated resident population	20.61		
Still Births	8
Still Birth rate per 1,000 total (live & Still) births	20.51		
<u>Death Rate.</u> Total number of deaths	249		
Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	13.13		

Puerperal Deaths.

	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Rate per 1,000 Births</u>
From puerperal sepsis	-	-
From other Maternal Causes	2	5.13

Infantile Mortality (Deaths of infants under one year of age.)

Legitimate	13
Illegitimate	<u>1</u>
	<u>13</u>
Rate of all infants per 1,000 live births	33.33
Rate of all legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	35.04
Rate of all illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	-

Other Deaths

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	33
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	-
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	-
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	1

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING 1947

CAUSE OF DEATH	M	F	TOTAL
ALL CAUSES	113	136	249
1. Typhoid and paratyphoid fevers	-	-	-
2. Cerebro-spinal fever	-	-	-
3. Scarlet Fever	-	-	-
4. Whooping Cough	-	-	-
5. Diphtheria	-	-	-
6. Tuberculosis of the respiratory system	4	4	8
7. Other forms of tuberculosis	4	-	4
8. Syphilitic disease	-	1	1
9. Influenza	1	2	3
10. Measles	-	-	-
11. Acute Poliomyelitis and poliocnecephalitis	-	-	-
12. Acute Infantile Encephalitis	-	-	-
13. Cancer of buccal cavity and oesophagus(m) Uterus (f)	1	1	2
14. Cancer of stomach and duodenum	7	2	9
15. Cancer of breast	-	2	2
16. Cancer of all other sites	10	10	20
17. Diabetes	1	-	1
18. Intra-cranial Vascular lesions	8	16	24
19. Heart disease	27	45	72
20. Other diseases of the circulatory system	2	2	4
21. Bronchitis	9	3	17
22. Pneumonia	3	3	6
23. Other respiratory diseases	4	2	6
24. Ulcer of stomach or duodenum	2	2	4
25. Diarrhoea under 2 years	1	-	1
26. Appendicitis	-	-	-
27. Other Digestive diseases	-	2	6
28. Nephritis	4	8	12
29. Puerperal and Post abortion Sepsis	-	-	-
30. Other maternal causes	-	2	2
31. Premature birth	2	1	3
32. Congenital malformation, birth injuries infantile diseases	1	1	2
33. Suicide	-	-	-
34. Road Traffic accidents	2	-	2
35. Other violent causes	6	4	10
36. All other causes	10	18	28

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND CONTIGIOUS DISEASES.

The following table sets out the cases of notifiable disease that occurred in the Rural District during 1947. The table is draw up after making the necessary amendments to the original notifications owing to corrections in diagnosis by either the practitioner or the Medical Officers at the Isolation Hospitals:-

<u>Disease</u>	
Acute Encephalitis Lethargica	-
Acute Poliomyelitis	4
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	5
Diphtheria	-
Dysentery	-
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid)	-
Erysipelas	2
Measles	133
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	-
Pneumonia	6
Puerperal Pyrexia	4
Scarlet Fever	9
Small Pox	-
Whooping Cough	41
	<u>204</u>

1. Apart from measles and whooping cough, which have shown the usual bi-annual rise, the number of cases of notifiable infectious diseases have been extremely low. The four cases of Acute Poliomyelitis (Infantile Paralysis) were scattered throughout the area. Considering the sharp rise in the incidence of the latter disease in the country as a whole, the total of four cases in the Rural District is not considered unsatisfactory.

2. Air Travel. The more extensive use of air travel by persons coming to this country from abroad, especially the Middle and Far East, has resulted in persons who may possibly have been contacts of infectious diseases, such as smallpox and cholera, arriving before the expiration of the incubation period. These passengers are allowed to proceed to their destination and are kept under surveillance for a period of 14 days. A number of such cases were notified to the Health Department and visits were made to the homes.

Diphtheria Immunisation

The following table shows the number of children who completed a course of immunisation during the year:-

Age under 5 years	Age 5 - 15 years	Total
193	44	237

3. As in previous years, each village, or a special centre serving groups of villages, was visited whenever there were sufficient children to warrant a special visit. I am extremely grateful to the District Nurses, School Teachers and voluntary helpers, without whose assistance and willing cooperation, it would have been impossible to carry out this most important work. I would like to report here that no cases of diphtheria were notified in the Rural District during the year under review.

3A. The best method of protection is to give each child two immunising injections at the age of one year, and a third reinforcing injection early in school life. Owing to the tendency, observed

throughout the country as a whole, for diphtheria to affect the older age groups of children, rather than the younger, a special drive was started to complete the reinforcing injections, and 432 such injections were given.

4. Tuberculosis

There were 68 cases of respiratory and 2 cases of non-respiratory tuberculosis notified during the year. The figure for respiratory cases is three more than the previous year.

5. Scabies

The number of Rural District cases of Scabies treated at the Old Isolation Hospital was as follows:-

Male Adults	-
Female Adults	3
Children	<u>11</u>
	<u>14</u>

The total number of new cases who attended the centre was more or less the same as in the previous year, but this is attributed to the abnormal weather conditions prevailing at the earlier part of the year. It is anticipated that there will be a considerable reduction in the incidence of Scabies, and consideration must be given to an alternative arrangements for treatment. The most satisfactory arrangement would be to combine a Scabies Treatment Centre with a Head Cleansing Centre, which would reduce considerably the cost of treating Scabies.

The number of cases from the Rural District is less than one quarter of last year's figures.

Factories Act, 1937.

The following particulars which are included in accordance with Ministry of Health circular 170347 dated 31.12.47, indicate the action taken under Part 1 of the Factories Act, 1937.

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written notices	Occupiers prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	83	17	2	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authorities				
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers premises)				
TOTAL	83	17	2	-

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness (s.1)					
Overcrowding (S.2)					
Unreasonable temperature (S.4)					
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)					
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) insuffucient	1	-		1	
(b) Unsuitable or defective	1	1		1	
(c) Not separate for sexes					
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	1	1		1	
TOTAL	3	2		3	

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

1. Water

Full details of the various sources of supply were given in the Report for the year 1955.

Samples of water have been regularly taken from the various sources of supply during the year, and generally speaking these have been satisfactory. Except in special and isolated circumstances, the quantity of water proved sufficient for the needs of the District.

Result of bacteriological examination

Supply	Number of examinations	Report	
		Satisfactory	Not satisfactory
1. Fiddington	5	5	-
2. Gonthurst	5	4	1
3. Nether Stowey	5	5	-
4. Thurloxten	7	4	3
5. Willoughby	12	12	-

Samples which did not give a satisfactory result were probably contaminated by vegetable matter and no special action was called for

The water supplies are not liable to plumbo-solvent action.

The table shown as Appendix A is inserted at the request of the Ministry of Health. It shows the number of dwelling houses and the number of the population supplied from public mains direct to the houses. No houses are supplied by public standpipe.

2. Sewerage.

A new sewer was laid in Joclavington Lane, Cossington to serve existing properties and proposed development. Otherwise work was confined to maintenance and relaying of short lengths of existing sewers.

Detailed schemes were prepared by the Consulting Engineers for sewage disposal works at Cannington and for sewers and disposal works at Nether Stowey and Chedzoy. These schemes have been approved by the Council and sanction to proceed with the work is awaited. Detailed schemes for other parishes are in the course of preparation.

3. Housing

The following table shows the progress made during the year:-

	Houses erected during year		Houses in course of erection		Conversion to flats or dwellings.
	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	
Local Authority	36	11	6	6	Nil
Private Enterprise	8	1	4	1	8
TOTAL	44	12	10	7	8

Houses required

- (a) to replace those unfit 652
 (b) to abate overcrowding 7
 (c) where conditions are unsatisfactory, e.g. two families living in same house, but not included in (a) or (b) Nil

Total number of applicants for Council Houses at the end of the year 933

4. Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

The records given in the Chief Sanitary Inspector's report show the number of insanitary conditions dealt with.

Appendix A to Annual Report by M.O.H. for year, 1947

	<u>Houses</u>	<u>Population</u>
Ashcott	160	812
Bawdrip	141	398
Bridgwater (without)	66	352
Broomfield	5	297
Cannington	246	1,132
Cateatt	123	541
Charlinch	14	127
Chedzoy	81	333
Chilton Polden	100	416
Chilton Trinity	35	156
Cossington	73	275
Durleigh	28	107
Edington	113	381
Emmery	41	302
Fiddington	32	178
Goathurst	13	242
Greinton	1 (Village supply)	108
Huntsrill	481	1,730
Lyng	83	348
Middlezoy	139	612
Moorlinch	42	256
Nether Stowey	176	676
North Petherton	893	3,691
Othery	137	507
Otterhampton	119	508
Over Stowey	41	503
Pawlett	155	512
Puriton	193	851
Shapwick	72	325
Spaxton	147	1,009
Stawell	69	288
Stockland Bristol	20	118
Thurloxtan	Nil	172
Wembdon	262	764
Westonzoyland	191	705
Woolavington	94	1,026

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR

FOR 1947

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1947.

This Report is again very much abbreviated and should be considered only as a summary of the work carried out during the year.

Staff.

Mr. W.R. Saunders, Additional Sanitary Inspector, left the service of the Council in June on appointment as Assistant County Sanitary Officer to the East Suffolk County Council, and Mr. A.A. Kommish, temporary Additional Sanitary Inspector resigned in April to take up duties as Additional Sanitary Inspector to the Warminster and Westbury R.D.C.

Mr. R.M. Davies was appointed to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mr. Saunders and he commenced duty in September.

These staff changes considerably dislocated the work of the Department particularly during the three months in which the office of Additional Sanitary Inspector was vacant.

The Council decided that Mr. Kommish should not be replaced.

Complaints and Nuisances.

The number of complaints investigated during the year was 139, an increase of 36 on the previous year. In many cases nuisances were abated as a result of informal action but it was found necessary to serve 16 Abatement Notices, an increase of 9 on 1946. On inspection, a number of complaints were found to be not justified and no action was taken in regard to them.

Of the nuisances found, 125 were abated during the year. Difficulty was again experienced in getting work carried out, owing to extreme shortage of labour and building materials and in many cases it was necessary to extend the time limit set out in Notices, in order to give owners of property fullest opportunity of abating nuisances. There is no doubt that some owners take advantage of this in an attempt to evade their responsibilities. The number of visits made in connection with nuisances was 387.

I feel that I must draw attention to the difficulties which are experienced owing to the lack of a map of sewers in the district. It is frequently very difficult to determine if a line of pipes is a private drain or sewer as there is no record in the office to which reference can be made. There are also a number of ditches and rhines in the district which receive sewage, some of which are recognised as sewers and cleansed and maintained by the Council whilst others are not. It is also difficult to decide on applications for permission to connect drains to a sewer if the status of the particular line of pipes is in doubt. An official map of sewers for the whole of the district would resolve all these difficulties; and such map should indicate the type of construction of the sewer, depth, size, position of manholes etc. I would point out that the Council have a statutory duty to provide such a map which must be kept available for inspection by any person at all reasonable hours in accordance with Section 32 of the Public Health Act, 1936.

Housing.

The number of houses inspected under the Housing Acts was 533. 12 houses were represented as unfit for habitation and incapable of being rendered fit at reasonable cost and Demolition Orders were

made by the Council in 13 cases. In two cases the Council accepted undertakings from the owners to carry out works within a stipulated time, and one undertaking not to use a house for human habitation was also accepted. Three houses, the subject of Demolition Orders, were demolished during the year.

The remarks made in my last two Annual Reports in regard to the difficulty of getting necessary repairs carried out owing to shortage of building labour and materials still apply. The position is very serious, and it is most discouraging to have to accept a lower standard of work than would have been permitted ten years ago. The use of unsuitable, poor quality materials, and substitute sanitary fittings, etc. will render renewals necessary at a comparatively early date. In many cases work has been held up for months by reason of inability to obtain such articles as soil and vent pipe, water pipe, inspection chamber covers, etc.

Every encouragement is given to owners of dilapidated houses to recondition their property, and I feel that the Council, in carrying out their duties in connection with building licensing, should exercise their discretion to enable this to be done to the fullest possible extent. The installation of water closets, sinks and septic tank drainage in place of insanitary privies or bucket closets is very welcome and it is distressing to find that in many cases the provision of a bath has been refused in the building licence. I am aware that this is in accordance with official instructions but after making due allowance for the shortage of baths, etc. it is regrettable that owners are not allowed to fit one in view of the small expenditure involved compared with the cost of drainage and other work which has to be carried out whether a bath is included or not.

It is unfortunate that many houses in this district have very low ceilings and reconditioning in these cases is a very expensive matter, and of course involves the use of new timber which is in very short supply. It is essential, however, that wherever possible this work should be carried out in order to give houses which are structurally sound a further period of useful life.

In regard to ordinary repairs and maintenance the operation of the Rent (Restrictions) Act is undoubtedly of considerable hardship to owners of property. It is becoming increasingly apparent that it is impossible for landlords to maintain their properties to a reasonable standard without incurring financial loss owing to the low rents to which they are restricted and which cannot be increased except in the manner provided by the Acts. Building costs have risen to an extremely high level, and in many cases the cost of repairs to a property is out of all proportion to the rents.

The housing shortage in the district remains acute, and has only be relieved to a very small extent by the very few houses which the Council have been permitted to build. In regard to the letting of Council houses priority has now to be given to agricultural workers, and considerable difficulty has arisen in reconciling this policy with the Council's statutory duty of giving preference in the selection of tenants to those families occupying insanitary or overcrowded houses.

Building licensing, which had been carried out by the Chief Sanitary Inspector since the inception of the scheme in August 1945, was transferred to the Engineer on 1st August, 1947. From 1st January, 1947 to 31st July, 313 building licences were issued, 61 applications for licences were refused and in 84 cases licences were issued for a lower sum than that applied for. The number of visits in connection with building licences was 338.

99 plans for structural alteration and additions to dwelling houses and other building were approved during the year, and the work was inspected in progress, 335 visits being made for this purpose. 12 plans were rejected by the Council by reason of non-compliance with the building byelaws.

The building byelaws now in operation in the district are not in accordance with the Ministry of Health's model, being a skeleton form adopted in 1937 to cover an interim period pending the adoption of byelaws based on the Ministry model. This was deferred by reason of the War, and the adoption of the standard code of building byelaws should be carried out as early as it is possible to do so.

The Rural Housing Survey was continued during the year 520 houses having been inspected and classified as follows:-

Categories:-	1. Satisfactory in all respects	1
	2. Minor defects.	71
	3. Repairs or structural alterations	338
	4. Suitable for Housing (R.W.) Acts.	52
	4a. Suitable for acquisition	-
	5. Unfit and cannot be repaired at a reasonable expense	110

Houses in Category 4 are, of course, also placed in one of the other categories.

Re-inspections were made in three cases.

Overcrowding.

Nine new cases of overcrowding were discovered during the year, and ten cases were abated by informal action.

Sixty four visits were made in connection with overcrowding.

Bakehouses.

Eight visits were made to bakehouses, and informal notices were duly complied with. One bakehouse changed ownership during the year.

General Sanitation

The following improvements were carried out, generally as the result of informal action:-

W.C.'s	27
Baths	21
Sinks	30
Chemical closets	5
Drainage Systems	18
Lavatory basins	23
Connections to water main	5
Connections to sewer	5
Larders	3
Flushing cisterns	23
Urinals	2

A number of other minor improvements were also carried out.

Meat and Food.

Every effort was made during the year to maintain the regular inspection of meat and other food at retail shops and 80 visits were made for this purpose.

It is also the practice to inspect the meat of animals killed for home consumption under licences issued by the Food Control Committee, and in view of the percentage of animals found to be diseased, this practice has found to be justified. 286 visits were made for this purpose.

I give below details of food condemned during the year:-

Beasts.

Carcass and organs	
Livers	1
Beef	1
Spleens	328 lbs.
	1

Sheep.

Carcass and organs	
Livers	8
Spleens	2
	1

Pigs.

Carcass and organs	
Head and tongues	5
Lungs	30
Livers	10
Mesenteries and intestines	1
Flucks	10
	5

Other foods.

Tins of various foods	
Bacon	850
Butter	5 lbs.
Margarine	1 lb.
Lard	119½ lbs.
Cake	½ lb.
Spaghetti	27 lbs
Potatoes	27 lbs
Soya Flour	12½ cwt.
	14 lbs.

Milk and Dairies.

The number of inspections carried out during the year was 316 a decrease of 100 on the previous year.

The number of producers on the register at the end of 1947 was 823 including 139 producer retailers. The number of producers of T.T. milk was 39 and there were also 28 producers of Accredited milk. The number of retail purveyors of milk was 19.

6 samples of milk were taken for testing for the presence of Tubercle Bacilli and no sample was found to give a positive result.

30 new registrations were granted during the year, 26 for wholesale purveyors, and 4 for retail purveyors.

The effort made to get improved conditions at dairy farms during the year produced the following results:-

New cowshed floors and improved drainage	18.
New cowsheds	
New dairies	10.
Main water supply to cowsheds	2.
New milking parlours	3.
	10.

Ice-cream.

The number of premises registered for the storage and sale of ice-cream at the end of the year was 16, and 5 premises were also registered for the manufacture of ice-cream. Each of these manufacturers produced ice-cream by "cold mix" method, followed by boiling of the product. Seven samples were taken during the year the results being as follows:-

Three samples were placed in provisional Grade 1.	
One sample was " " " Grade 2:	
One " " " " Grade 3.	
Two Samples were " " " Grade 4.	

Repeat samples were taken as early as possible in the case of the Grade 4 samples, the subsequent samples being placed in Grade 1 and Grade 2.

Moveable Dwellings

47 visits were made during the year in connection with moveable dwellings.

Infectious Diseases.

27 disinfections were carried out during the year, 43 visits being made in connection with infectious diseases.

Vermineous Premises.

18 visits were made to vermineous premises and 7 dwellings were treated for vermin; in addition 15 visits were made in connection with rodent infestation.

The post of Rodent Operative remained vacant throughout the year.

Summary of visits.

Water supply	32.
Drainage	223.
Knackers Yard	24.
Moveable Dwellings	47.
Factories	9.
Bakehouses	8.
Shops	6.
Refuse Disposal	3.
Rodent Infestation	15.
Miscellaneous Sanitary Visits	173.
Nuisances	387.
New work	335.
Building Licensing	338.
Housing Inspections	533.
Overcrowding	64.
Miscellaneous Housing Visits	42.
Infectious Diseases	43.
Vermineous Premises	18.
Butchers Shops and Slaughterhouses	80.
Animals killed for home consumption	286.
Cowsheds and dairies	316.
Ice-cream Premises	20.
Milk Sampling	6.
Miscellaneous Food Visits	41.
	<u>3,049.</u>

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

F.A. MAILE,

Chief Sanitary Inspector

